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2 May 1957

Mr. William Benton  
Publisher & Chairman  
Encyclopaedia Britannica  
342 Madison Avenue  
New York 17, New York

Dear Bill,

I appreciated your good letter of April 23  
advising that you are sending a copy of the "1957  
Britannica Book of the Year."

This is very thoughtful of you and I am  
looking forward to receiving it.

I also want to thank you for the copy of  
your address, "A Challenge to Catholic Educators"  
which your assistant, Mr. Howe, forwarded under  
date of April 24th. I read it with considerable  
interest and appreciate your kind reference to  
me.

Faithfully,

Allen W. Dulles,  
Director

O/DCI/FMC:jaf

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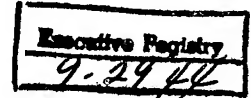
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ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA  
342 MADISON AVENUE  
SUITE 702  
NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

WILLIAM BENTON  
PUBLISHER & CHAIRMAN

April 23, 1957

Dear Allen:

I've asked my Chicago office to send you our "1957 Britannica Book of the Year", which is just off the press. It is the record of an eventful year which included the U. S. presidential election.

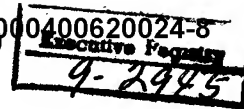
The 1957 printing of the 24-volume Encyclopaedia Britannica - the "parent" of the Year Book - has four million new words in its total of forty million, and this may help show the speed at which the world changes in our time. As Publisher of Britannica, I like to think the annual Book of the Year, with its one million words, is the best quick summary of changes in any one year.

Two events of tremendous potential significance, internationally, interested me especially in 1956 - Khrushchev's speech at the February Communist Congress "downgrading" Stalin, and the revolt in Eastern Europe in the autumn; to me personally, both events had more significance because of what I had learned in my recent trip to Russia and in the preparation of my feature article in the 1956 Year Book ("The Voice of the Kremlin").

I hope you may find many reasons during 1957 to refer to the Britannica Year Book. But if you don't like it, or can't find what you are seeking, I hope you will blame the Editor rather than the Publisher. This year, I'm not an author.

Very sincerely yours,

William Benton



ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA  
342 MADISON AVENUE  
SUITE 702  
NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

April 24, 1957

*Handwritten: 7 Benton's April 24, 1957*  
Dear Mr. Dulles:

Senator Benton is giving the principal talk tomorrow night at the Superintendents' Dinner during the annual convention of the National Catholic Education Association in Milwaukee. He refers to you on page 11.

Sincerely yours,

*John Howe*

John Howe  
Assistant to William Benton

The Honorable  
Allen Dulles  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D.C.

att.

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Address by Hon. William Benton  
Publisher, Encyclopaedia Britannica  
National Catholic Educational Assn.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 25, 1957

A CHALLENGE TO CATHOLIC EDUCATORS

I am honored to have been asked to talk to you tonight about one of the most urgent subjects in today's world. The last time I spoke in Wisconsin I was cast as the keynoter of the 1952 Democratic state convention. It was a moment when Wisconsin Democrats were worried by their state's junior Senator much more than they appear to be today. I am happy to be here again - and under today's auspices.

Monsignor McManus said recently that the Catholic schools are "the most flourishing and fastest-growing educational enterprise in the United States." Dramatic proof of this growth is the size and scope of your convention here in Milwaukee.

I am here with you because Father Donnelly, the President of Loyola University of New Orleans, read an article I wrote for the 1956 Britannica Year Book. This grew out of a visit by Mrs. Benton and me to the U.S.S.R. about eighteen months ago. Father Donnelly suggested to Monsignor Hochwalt that I talk to you about Soviet education and what it means for America and for Catholic education in America. The rest was easy. Msgr. Hochwalt and I have been friends since we served together in Paris in 1946 on the United States delegation to the first General Conference of UNESCO. I well recall how Monsignor Hochwalt thrilled our entire delegation - on our first Sunday in Paris - when he delivered the sermon at High Mass in the Cathedral of Notre Dame.

My interest in Soviet education dates from that Paris conference. The cold war hadn't yet been declared for all to see, and the Soviets had given no clear answer on their intentions toward UNESCO. Would the U.S.S.R. sabotage the Western world in educational and cultural matters? I was then serving as Assistant Secretary of State. I decided to go to Moscow to make inquiries. Gen. Bedell Smith, our Ambassador to Moscow, sent his plane to Paris to fetch me. My wife and I flew a first leg as far as Berlin. There we drew a stony-faced blank from the Russians. The Iron Curtain was riveted down. We weren't wanted. We couldn't get clearance. Back we went to Paris.

Because you here work in the field of primary and secondary education I shall limit myself tonight to three quick points about the higher Soviet institutions, and then I shall go on - or back - to the lower schools. I am going to stress three positive points - and deliberately. The positive points have the most to teach us. I never believe in underestimating an opponent, and this particular opponent - the Communist hierarchy - boasts of the anticipated annihilation of the west. The teaching of the communist dogma is neatly embalmed in an apocryphal anecdote from the Yalta Conference of 1945. One morning as Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin assembled for the daily round of conferences, Churchill removed his cigar from his mouth and said, "Gentlemen, I want to tell you of a momentous dream I had last night. I dreamt that God approached my bed in a blazing halo and anointed my forehead, saying, 'Winston, I hereby proclaim you Prime Minister of the World.'" Roosevelt thereupon jauntily tilted his cigarette holder and said, "How odd! I had a similar experience, except that in my dream God anointed me

saying, 'Franklin, I hereby declare you President of the world.'"  
Whereupon Stalin puffed on his pipe and said, "This is strange, for I too had a similar dream; but I don't remember having anointed either of you!"

My first point deals with the dimensions of the higher Soviet system. We Americans are proud that our college and university enrollment recently passed the 3 million mark. But the comparable Soviet figure is 3,775,000, and it is growing faster than ours. The Soviets boast 1,825,000 students in 33 Soviet universities and 800 higher institutes, and another 1,950,000 in 3,709 tekhnikums. (The tekhnikum in full flower as it exists today is a uniquely Russian institution - best described as a vocational college.) In addition to these full-time students millions take correspondence and evening classes. The current figures that seem most to upset Americans are for engineering. A year or so ago the Soviets graduated 63,000 new engineers to our 23,000.

My second point concerns the quality of Soviet higher education. Within their specialties, Soviet graduates measure up well with our own. Except for 10% of their time which all must devote to Marxism-Leninism, they concentrate narrowly on their specialties. As specialists, they are competent. We Americans will delude ourselves if we attribute Russian advances in science and technology - for example in atomic physics and aeronautics - mainly, or even largely, to imitation, or to espionage, or to the work of captured German scientists.

My third quick point concerns the talent of Soviet students. Here in the United States we have been jolted by a series of recent studies. These studies show that, of the top 20% of our high school

population in intelligence, not more than one in three is graduated from college. Every year 200,000 exceptionally promising American youngsters fail to make the jump from high school into college - half of them because their families can't afford it.

This particular kind of wastage of a national asset isn't indulged in by the U.S.S.R. No people in the world today, with such possible exceptions as the Scots and the Jews, give more attention to developing talented young people. By the use of persuasion, and by incentives and pressures - in a combination that gives the individual very little real choice - the Soviet state steers its promising students into fields it decides are important and then holds them in the educational system up to the highest point of training they can absorb.

Money isn't a problem for a Soviet student. There is now no tuition charge at any level. Above the secondary school, every student gets a cash stipend of about half a worker's wages. In fields the government is emphasizing, pay is higher; for example, it is higher in aeronautical engineering than in history. Its size also depends on how well the student performs in examinations. Further, if he does well, he is deferred from the draft; in some fields he is exempted permanently.

Most important of all, the Soviets make the life of the professional man, the scientist, the scholar and the engineer - the most desirable, or perhaps I should say the least undesirable, in the U.S.S.R. Such groups are treated and rewarded as counterparts to our American corporation presidents. In the U.S.S.R. it is they who get the cars and chauffeurs, the vineyards and the dachas in the country. This helps explain why Russian youngsters work their hearts

out, and often wash their brains out, to climb the educational ladder.

A few weeks ago Professor Edward Teller of the University of California, called "the father of the hydrogen bomb", made a statement that should have rocked this country. He says we Americans have already lost the cold war of science to the Russians. Because it takes a dozen or more years to produce a scientist, and because the Russians have more young people in training than we do, and because they have kept their talented students in the educational system, there is now no conceivable way, says Dr. Teller, to prevent the Soviets within the next few years from overtaking and surpassing us in numbers and quality of scientists. If we Americans are to regain our scientific lead, our target date must be in the '70's or the '80's. The '60's, says Dr. Teller, are already lost.

To help us combat this crisis, a year ago I proposed that the federal government annually grant 100,000 competitive four-year college scholarships, plus 20,000 graduate fellowships. As in the G.I. Bill, the successful candidate should choose his own institution.

In addition to tuition and living expenses, each scholarship would provide a "cost of education" bonus to the institution.

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Now I shall move on to Soviet primary and secondary education; first with a brief description and second, with some of the implications for our own educational system here in America and particularly for Catholic education.

The Soviet system draws much of its quality from its Czarist precursors. But prior to 1914 no more than one-half of Russian children of primary school age were ever enrolled in school; at least half of all Russians remained illiterate throughout their lives.

Probably the greatest single Soviet achievement has been the gigantic program to bring every child into school. If the Communists have given up butter for guns, they have given up meat for education. Obviously they didn't invent universal education: We Americans were the pioneers. Universal education has been part of the American Dream for more than a century. But it is now a fact of life that the communists are attempting to pilfer our American Dream of universal education and in broad daylight.

The core of the Soviet system is the so-called Ten-Year School. This is roughly comparable with our 12-year elementary and high school system. Please believe me when I tell you that the Russians pack far more facts, and alleged facts, into their children's heads in those ten years than we do in our twelve. I do not suggest, however, that facts are the sole aim or even the primary objective of education.

All children enter the ten-year school at age 7. The first four grades, devoted to reading, writing and arithmetic, were made compulsory for all in 1930. The next three grades, the so-called "incomplete secondary" years, were made compulsory in 1947. The big decision to make the full 10 years universal and obligatory was taken in 1951. The target date is 1960 for all children from 7 to 17 and the goal had been 70% realized by 1955.

In the last six years of the Ten-Year school the academic pressure mounts progressively. History, geography and literature enter the curriculum. Each student must devote six years to one foreign language. In the Federated Republic, which embraces three-fifths of the population of the U.S.S.R. and extends from the Baltic to the Pacific, every student, in every grade, is studying the same

subjects at the same time, and with the same textbooks, with the single exception of his choice of a foreign language. English, as the new language of science, is now the favorite. John Gunther recently reported that there are 41,000 teachers of English in the U.S.S.R. My wife met one of them in the famous Moscow subway. Her Russian chauffeur was unable to explain its marvels except by gesticulation. A young man introduced himself and in excellent English took over as guide. After five or six minutes, as he turned to leave, he hesitantly queried my wife, "Madam, may I ask you a question? How is my English?" She replied, "Your English is fine; indeed it's perfect." He insisted, "Please be frank with me because I am an English teacher." She repeated, "I assure you your accent is perfect." He turned away and again came back, "Madam," he said gravely, "you are the first foreigner to whom I have ever spoken in my life." Then he vanished into the crowd.

The most striking feature of the ten year curriculum is its emphasis on mathematics and science. Every graduate must complete mathematics through trigonometry. Each must take five years of physics, four years of chemistry, four years of biology, and one of astronomy. Some of our American experts have recently obtained copies of the science examinations used for the Ten Year Certificate. These examinations approximate the level required for admission to our American university graduate departments of science.

Admiral Lewis Strauss, chairman of our Atomic Energy Commission, comparing Soviet secondary education with our own, has stated: "I can learn of no public high school in our country where a student obtains so thorough a preparation in science and mathematics, even if he seeks it -- even if he should be a potential

Einstein, Edison, Fermi, or Bell."

Soviet boys and girls, like their west European counterparts, work far harder than do our American youngsters. Wearing their military-looking uniforms, they attend classes for long hours each day, six days a week, ten months a year. Discipline is strict. Examinations are severe. Beginning with the fourth year, pupils take examinations each spring covering an entire year's work. Examinations are oral as well as written, and are conducted in the presence of visiting inspectors.

One facet of the Soviet school system which dramatizes its growing efficiency, and which was of particular interest to me as Chairman of Encyclopaedia Britannica Films, the largest producer of classroom films in the free world, was the rapid strides in the development of audio-visual education. Mr. Ivan Kairov, Minister of Education of the Federated Republic, said to me, "the use of films is of tremendous importance."

In the Soviet Union, if a Minister of Education decides that 200 new films are to be produced and used, the 200 are produced and used. Here in the United States, more than a quarter century of patient work has gone into demonstrating the value of this new tool to individual teachers, principals, and school boards. We are still ahead of the Soviets in the quality of our films. Most of their films are of the documentary type, not integrated into the curriculum as are ours. But the Soviets seem to be surging ahead of us in their use of films.

In Kiev I visited a studio that produces educational films. Four pictures were screened for me. One was titled, "The Story of the Note Book." The film opens with a teacher -- a very attractive

woman teacher -- talking to a class of 8 or 9-year olds. She holds up examples of the children's note books. Some have smudges. Some have fingerprints. Some have sloppy writing. She tells the children she wants them to appreciate the work that goes into producing a note book. She turns to a still picture of lumbermen felling great pine trees, a still picture hanging right there on the classroom wall. Suddenly this picture begins to move and there we are -- off on a very creditable movie showing the making of paper from the pine tree right through to the note book -- with the teacher's voice narrating throughout. At the end we go back into the classroom, with the pupils standing up and swearing to the teacher that henceforward they will treat their note books with the respect they deserve.

I was shown a new catalogue published by the Ministry of Culture, listing nearly 1,000 educational films. Under the section on astronomy, for example, there was a film on solar and lunar eclipses; another on the changing of the seasons; one on the sun, another on the universe. One astronomy film was entitled "Heavenly Guests." I couldn't quite figure out what this meant - perhaps comets.

David Johnston, an audio-visual expert at the University of London, visited the U.S.S.R. last year. In one Ten-Year School near Moscow, which seemed to him fairly typical, he found movie projectors in the biology room and the chemistry room. For physics, there were two film projectors, two film-strip projectors and two epidiascopes. The school library had over 200 physics films, and over 200 geography films. An assistant sets up the equipment, but the teacher controls the actual projection from a switch panel at his desk. Even the lowering and raising of the window-blinds was motorized in this school.

In another school, Mr. Johnston counted ten movie projectors.

So you will see that the Soviets are moving swiftly in this new and major area of educational technology. I fear they are likely to reach the goal of a projector in every classroom before we reach the goal of a projector in every school building. I warned you I would stress the strong points of Soviet education. Another good quick example is that in the U.S.S.R. there need be no shortage of physics teachers; draft exemption as an incentive should see to that.

Most obviously Soviet education also has its serious problems. With new millions to enroll, it faces a shortage of school rooms even more acute than ours. The new millions may also force on the system some lowering of standards. In the Ten-Year schools, poly-technical courses are beginning to replace logic and psychology, and some examinations are being abandoned.

But the Soviet system has weaknesses deeper and far more tragic, by our standards, than these. Fundamentally, it is a system of training rather than education. It is aimed wholly at service to the Soviet state. It is designed to sharpen human tools for coming Five Year Plans. Because the end is narrow, the students concentrate narrowly. Because the end is specific, teachers and examiners place heavy emphasis on rote memorization.

For forty years the Soviets have been trying to abolish moral absolutes, and to establish in their stead materialistic absolutism. The Soviet constitution promises freedom of religion. In practice this means freedom from religion. All religion is systematically combatted in the schools and through the youth organizations. But, ironically, the Soviets have reared a strange "religion" of their

own, complete with an elaborate theology of atheism, embracing the dialectical trinity as expounded in the gospel according to Marx, Lenin and Stalin. They even have seminaries and missionaries to disseminate their mystique of materialism. Although Stalin has now been de-deified by his successors, we must not forget the divinity that still surrounds the Communist Party in the minds of its votaries. And of course all of us know that many Communists have been known to go to confession - and never come back!

Mr. Allen Dulles, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency in Washington, has suggested that education may prove to be the Achilles' heel of communism. Can the Communists educate young people to think about chemistry and engineering without also teaching them to think? If students think clearly about medicine and aeronautics, won't they be apt to think about politics, economics and philosophy - and about religion? That simple question may prove to be the central issue of our time. We can hope and pray that the answer is favorable, but we dare not assume that it will be, or base our national policy on such an assumption. The example of Germany in the 30's, with its advanced science and technology, is all too vivid. The only prudent policy for the United States is to seek to multiply its own best efforts.

Educating the whole man, rather than training the prototype of the specialist, the technician or the functionary, must remain our American goal. Yes, our young people need more mathematics and more science. But not because they must operate a technocratic society. They need mathematics and science because these disciplines are essentials of a liberal education.

Communism flings a sharp challenge to American educators in general, and to Catholic educators in particular. The challenge is this: to be our own best selves. Catholic education has its own unique intellectual tradition. At its purest it is a tradition of liberal education.

Twenty years ago, Dr. Robert M. Hutchins, then president of the University of Chicago, reminded the midwest division of your Association that the Catholic church has "the longest intellectual tradition of any institution in the contemporary world." He then levelled against Catholic education in the United States what he called a "scandalous accusation", that it had failed to emphasize its age-old tradition of cultivating the intellect and instead had imitated the worse features of secular education, among which he listed athleticism, collegiatism, vocationalism, and anti-intellectualism. In brief, the trouble with Catholic education was that it was not Catholic enough.

Father John Courtney Murray, the distinguished theologian who serves as the advisor on articles pertaining to Roman Catholicism in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, spoke here in Milwaukee last spring. He referred to the Roman Catholic population of the United States as "a segment of our society, fully integrated into the pluralistic structure, which has now become so large that its educational needs and interests have become public needs and interests, at the same time that they remain special to the particular community". Today, with over 4 million students enrolled - 11% of all school and college enrollments in the United States - the Catholic schools have numbers enough not only to carry weight but to provide leadership in every community.

Must not our Catholic schools strive increasingly to become citadels of intellectual as well as moral excellence? They have the tradition. They have the organization. Already, on one great moral issue, they have given leadership to the entire nation. That issue is segregation.

The moral case for desegregation is of course manifest, but today there are two powerful new arguments, arguments of prudence, rising out of the international strains of competitive coexistence. The first is that a billion dark-skinned human beings in the under-developed areas who are now deciding whether to follow the leadership of the free world, look with grave misgiving at the spectacle of racial discrimination in the United States. The second is that we can no longer afford to waste the talent of our Negro youth.

Long before the Supreme Court decision of May, 1954, Catholic elementary and high schools in area after area where segregation had been firmly entrenched by law and custom, quietly opened their doors to Negroes. Before 1954 twenty-five Catholic colleges, universities and seminaries had desegregated - including institutions in Mississippi, Louisiana, and the District of Columbia. They have thus provided a stirring example for the public institutions.

Because they hold to a common acceptance of first principles and objectives, Catholic schools and colleges have a special opportunity to work toward what must be established as the primary aim of American education: producing not highly trained technicians on the Soviet model but educated individuals on the American model - men and women who possess wisdom as well as knowledge; compassion as well as high personal standards; convictions as well as disciplined reasoning; sensitivity to beauty as well as tough-minded ability to

distinguish between the genuine and the counterfeit; individuality as well as willingness to work together with others toward a common goal. Because teachers in Catholic schools are for the most part dedicated on the basis of religious vocation, their training can be more carefully supervised, their professional careers more systematically organized. Curriculum reforms can be achieved more readily than in public education -- provided there is a will among Catholic educators to make such reforms.

There are increasing indications that such a will not only exists but is strengthening. Catholic schools and colleges throughout the country are trying imaginative new approaches. The Sisters of Mercy in Chicago, for example, are experimenting with the idea that education should be regarded as a continuous process. They are developing an integrated education -- from kindergarten through the fourth year of college -- in which each part is related to all the others, and through which the student can proceed at his own best pace.

The University of Notre Dame is reorganizing the entire curriculum of its College of Arts and Letters - to give greater unity and purpose to undergraduate studies. Too often in American higher education these are nothing but a hodge-podge of unrelated tidbits.

One of the most interesting new developments in Catholic education -- one that grew out of your 1952 convention in Kansas City -- is the Sister Formation Conference. This remarkable venture undertaken by the major orders of teaching nuns in the United States has won the support of the Fund for the Advancement of Education of the Ford Foundation. It aims at nothing less than a complete revolution in the recruitment and training of religious teachers for the

Catholic schools.

A ferment is indeed stirring Catholic education in the United States at this midpoint of the Twentieth Century. It rises out of what seems to me - as a non-Catholic layman - a most remarkable capacity for constructive self-criticism. This in turn springs from newly-strengthened confidence. With boldness, imagination, and a willingness to change -- Catholic schools and colleges may well realize in the decades ahead the full potential of their matchless tradition.

I leave you, as I began, with a quotation from Monsignor McManus: "Our Catholic schools are going places. Those who staff and direct them have talent, ambition, energy, capacity for hard work, boundless enthusiasm and the priceless asset of an assurance of God's benevolent help." And I add to Monsignor McManus: What a magnificent moment to be alive - to be here at this great convention - and to be at such a work!